B. Small Incident
Books Not Printed on Coated Paper

A small disaster is anything that can be handled in-house with no assistance from an outside concern. Damage to fewer than 75 volumes would fall into this category. Each institution should have some supplies on hand for emergencies. Usually, a problem of this size will not require the purchase of any additional supplies. Possible scenarios are a leaky pipe, a window left open during a rainstorm, or a bucket knocked over by a janitor. A disaster on this scale is likely to happen in every institution on a regular basis. Everyone should be able to deal with a situation of this magnitude. The following are steps to be taken in the event of a small incident:

1. Disaster is reported to staff members.

2. Appropriate sections of the disaster plan are implemented.

3. Staff member visits site to determine extent of problem. Steps should be taken to correct the problem. This usually means calling Plant Operations/Maintenance. (Make sure that Plant Operations/Maintenance is notified through proper channels.) If necessary the environment should be stabilized, although, in many cases this will not be necessary. Dehumidifiers and fans can be used to lower the humidity and keep pockets of stagnant air from forming. Extreme changes in temperature and humidity can be damaging to books. The conditions should be returned to normal as quickly as possible.

4. If institution materials are damaged, steps should be taken to limit the extent of damage. If it is a leaky pipe, plastic sheeting should be draped over the affected area; if a window is left open, it should be closed; etc. At this point a staff member knowledgeable about disaster recovery should be called and informed of the situation. This person decides whether to move the books, and if so, how to move the books, and where to move them. Take pictures throughout the recovery process. This will be especially important if the disaster occurs in an insured area. Also, people familiar with the insurance policy should be notified so that future claims are not jeopardized. Normally, a disaster of this size will not involve structural damage.

5. In a small disaster, the damaged books can be placed on a book truck. A metal truck is preferred. If the institution owns only wooden book trucks, they should be covered in plastic so that the books do not affect the varnish and vice versa. When loading a book truck do not place all the books on one side and do not place them all on the top shelf. Evenly distribute the weight of the books so that the book truck is not unstable. **Keep the center of gravity as low as possible.**

6. A basic inventory of removed material should be maintained. Never write on wet books, because they are easily damaged.

7. If books are muddy, they should be washed, prior to drying, if possible. **This treatment is not suitable for leather bound books, manuscripts, photographs, works of art on paper, or books that are open.** Washing requires a large space with adequate drainage. Several plastic garbage cans, each with a hose should be set up. The nozzle of the hose should be at the base of the garbage can. This should allow the dirtiest water to overflow. The books should be held tightly closed. Submerge the books and allow the running water to rinse off some of the mud. Moving down the row of garbage pails, the books can be sponged off until most of the dirt is removed. **N.B.** Sponging does not mean rubbing, it is dabbing the dirt off.

8. Freeze only those items that cannot be air dried. (See Special Media, p. 10E.1.) **Mold will begin to grow within 72 hours.** Start with the wettest items; they will usually be on the bottom shelves.

9. It is necessary to control the environment of the drying area. A relative humidity between 40-55% is considered best. Circulating air is critical for both encouraging evaporation and discouraging mold growth. Fans and dehumidifiers may be required. Wet trash should be removed periodically from the recovery area. Also, the person monitoring the drying process should check frequently for mold growth.

10. In a small disaster the books can be air-dried. When books are air-dried they should be placed on their heads (with print upside down) on white blotting paper with their boards opened slightly, about 60 degrees. It may be necessary to use styrofoam or foam rubber supports to keep the books in place. The blotting paper should be changed when it becomes wet. As the book begins to dry, unprinted newsprint or paper towels can be interleaved throughout the book, about every 50 pages. These “blotters” must also be changed, periodically.

11. If the cover is destroyed, the book can be unbound into individual ***signatures***. The ***signatures*** can then be hung on nylon fishing line (20 or 40 pound test line) and allowed to air dry. Use three lines to support materials. Pamphlets or small, damp books can also be dried in this manner.

12. Air drying takes up a great deal of space. Allow room for removing the damp blotting papers and replacing them with dry ones. Circulating air is critical for encouraging evaporation. Use fans, blowers, or open windows. When the book is almost dry it should be closed and a light weight placed on top. These books should not be stacked. If the book is allowed to dry completely in an open position there will be distortion. A book is dry when it no longer feels cool to the

touch.

13. The disaster recovery coordinator should fill out forms relating to the disaster. Every institution should have a standard form for documenting problems. (See Appendix C: Reports of Disasters, p. X:C.) Information needed includes location, time, date, nature of the problem, staff involved, action taken, number of items damaged, recovery strategy, supplies used, and clean-up activities. Photographs should also be taken throughout the recovery process. If insurance claims are involved more detailed documentation may be required.

14. When things have calmed down and the shock has worn off, check the disaster area. Make sure that all damaged items are found. Check clean up of disaster area. The shelves may have to be cleaned with a germicidal cleaner. Hospitals can be a good source of information about cleaning because they understand the concept of sterile. If liquid Lysol or a similar cleaning solution is used it should be mixed in the ratio of one cup cleaner to one gallon of water. If the disaster involved water, it is a good idea to check the underside of the shelves and all nooks and crannies for standing water. Disposable cleaning rags should be used. Some cleaners are caustic so protective clothing, e.g. rubber gloves, may be required for workers.

15. Make decisions on rebinding, repairs, and, if things were lost, replacement. Protective enclosures, e.g. ***phase boxes*** may be the wisest use of repair monies.

16. Return books to shelves. After drying, especially vacuum drying, a book will be drier than it should be. A book will absorb moisture from the air until it has stabilized. It takes a long time for books to return to normal. Peter Waters of the Library of Congress thinks that six months may be required.

17. Discuss disaster recovery operations. Where did the disaster plan not function well? Are there possible modifications to the plan?

18. Periodically check the disaster area to make sure that the books have not become moldy. Books that have been moldy will always be susceptible to mold growth.

19. Replace disaster recovery supplies used in the incident.